

## REPORT

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SOURCE      Le Messenger d'Athenes.

GIVES DATA ON SOVIET TROOP MOVEMENTS NEAR YUGOSLAVIA

On the basis of information which appeared in the British press, the disposition of Soviet troops in the vicinity of Yugoslavia can be established with precision. Under the terms of an agreement between the Big Four, the Soviet Union is permitted to maintain contingents in Hungary and Rumania to assure contact between the USSR and Soviet Zone Austria. The obstacles which the USSR has placed in the way of the conclusion of a peace treaty with Austria can be attributed to the USSR's intention not to withdraw its troops from these regions.

The movements of the Soviet troops can not be considered as mere changes of garrisons but as an actual attack formation with a first echelon located near the borders of Yugoslavia. This echelon is composed of armored assault divisions, motorized divisions, or paratroops. There is also a powerful air force. According to the British source, the following large units have been verified in the neighborhood of the Yugoslav borders.

In Hungary. 17th Infantry Division, one of the completely motorized Soviet divisions. This division formerly formed the garrison of Astrakhan and was transported by rail to Hungary. The headquarters is in the vicinity of Szombathely, a strategically important junction. Excellent roads lead from Szombathely north to Vienna, west via Graz to Trieste and Italy, and south to Zagreb. Maps of the northern Yugoslavia have just been distributed to units of this division, according to Western agents. Since these maps relate not only to the Zagreb region but also to the territory east of Croatia as far as Novi Sad, we can draw interesting conclusions on the direction of the eventual attack.

To reach Zagreb, the Soviets would have to cross Slovenia, a former Austro-Hungarian province which was incorporated into Yugoslavia in 1918 without asking the advice of the inhabitants. The Slovenes, who have a long-standing grudge against the Serbs, have never forgotten this forced annexation.

The 17th Division is considered as an assault unit and is composed of soldiers who have had much practice in handling vehicles. Like all special divisions, it has three infantry regiments in contrast to two regiments of the

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ordinary divisions. In addition to the normal field pieces, its artillery includes 130-millimeter long-range guns and 170-millimeter heavy guns. Western artillery divisions do not have mortars but the Soviet regiments have two 120- and two 170-millimeter mortars each, which greatly increases the fire power of the 12,000-man division.

The 81st Armored Division, stationed in the region of Lake Balaton, 65 kilometers north of Szombathely, is a normal division which is to be used to reinforce an assault division. The division includes two tank regiments, each of three battalions of four companies. Similar to the infantry divisions, the Soviet tank divisions are superior in artillery to the Western divisions.

The 90th Armored Division, located at Baja, has the identical composition of the foregoing. Another, unidentified, Soviet armored division arrived recently at Kiskunhalas, 50 kilometers north of Baja.

The 211th National Guard Armored Division forms the garrison at Zenged. Recently it left and crossed the Rumanian border.

The 214th National Guard Armored Division is located in the region of Mako, 22 kilometers east of Zenged. A Soviet infantry division - or, according to other reports, two Soviet infantry divisions - is stationed in the region of Nagybarascka, southeast of Baja.

The 1st Paratroop Division (Hungarian) is located in the vicinity of Papa. This division, with the 81st Armored Division and the 17th Motorized Division, will form an "assault concentration" (in the Soviet army there is no army corps) and act as the advance guard in Croatia, according to Allied experts.

There are new air bases in Hungary. The military air base at Papa has many fields, the largest of which has a runway 2,500 meters long. This air base has about 120 fighter planes. There are two airfields in the suburbs of Budapest which are staffed entirely by Soviets and are used for heavy bombers. There is also a field for heavy bombers at the south end of Lake Balaton. The Soviets are also using the military air bases at Zenged, Veszprem, and Nagykanizsa. The entire region of the Matra Mountains north of Budapest is occupied by Soviet troops. Hungarians are not permitted to enter this region.

The Hungarian Army is being reorganized at this time. The strength is to be raised to 120,000.

In Rumania. At present, there are no Soviet troops along the border between Rumania and Yugoslavia. The Soviet troops in Rumania are estimated at three or four infantry divisions and constitute a reserve force. The military airdromes at Oradea and Timisoara are under Soviet management.

In Bulgaria. Identified units: 2d Guard Division, which has a composition similar to the 17th Division. Contingents of the 2d Division recently passed through Vidin. Also, a division of Greek Communists was brought by sea from Albania to Bulgaria and debarked at Stalin (formerly Varna).

The Bulgarian Army is being reorganized and will eventually consist of six or seven Soviet-type divisions. The privates are good but the cadres have been decimated by the continual purges.

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Considering the composition of the forces, the Soviet plan of attack is to execute two main moves simultaneously. One is to be from Hungary toward Croatia and the other from Bulgaria toward the Morava River valley. Yugoslavia would then be seized in a pincers which would close south of Belgrade.

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